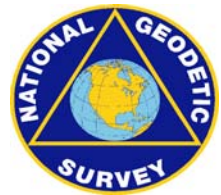




# The Observer

NATIONAL GEODETIC SURVEY



MARCH 2005



St. Patrick's Day - 17th

Spring Begins - 20th

Easter Sunday - 27th



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**Ruth Osborne**  
Editor

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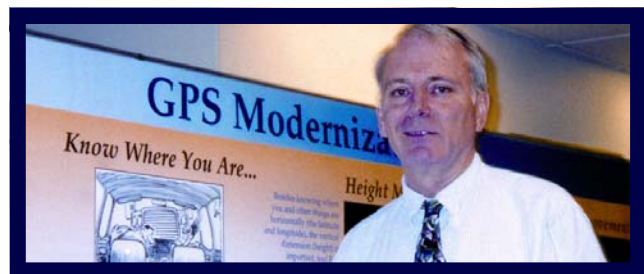
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## NGS Director Featured in ACSM Bulletin

NGS Director Charlie Challstrom was featured in the November/December 2004 issue of the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) Bulletin. Charlie highlighted "what lies ahead" for NGS, with respect to its dynamic workforce. NGS' staff is constantly changing — there are staff retirements and re-assignments, as well as new hires that have to be trained in order for NGS to maintain successful performance levels in the future.

According to Charlie, NGS is "...becoming an agency with a broader set of responsibilities toward a broader user community." Our customer base changes constantly. We are becoming enablers and trainers, instead of being the doers, thanks to the Global Positioning System and other technological advances. Our role is to enable state and local governments, as well as the



private sector, to continue to provide centimeter-level position measurements. NGS continues to work with its partners through its priorities, including: the Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS) network, Height Modernization (HM), Coastal Mapping, and others (see the full article to get more details on these programs). In addition to working with these programs, NGS has increased its technological capabilities — in using techniques such as Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR), location-based services, and projects designed to obtain survey data from vehicles such as automobiles, while in motion — for data that is closer to "real time." These new concepts have allowed for improved surveying and mapping. With highly accurate survey data, NGS can better serve its customers. Charlie says we are, "...striving to develop tools that would make surveying data more accessible and shareable." To access the article, visit [<http://ngsweb.ngs.noaa.gov/2004Convocation/ChallstromInterview.pdf>](http://ngsweb.ngs.noaa.gov/2004Convocation/ChallstromInterview.pdf)




## New State Advisor Sworn In





***Denis Riordan, Jr.***  
***Louisiana State Geodetic Advisor***

### Louisiana Facts



The state of Louisiana continues to be affected by subsidence, chiefly in its southern areas. After all, it has 43,562 square miles of land to maintain, according to Census 2000 figures. That equates to 102.6 persons per square mile of land. Since being admitted to the union on April 30, 1812, Louisiana has grown vastly. In its first census (1820), the “pelican state” reported 153,407 persons. Currently, the latest Census Bureau estimate (July 1, 2004) reported the state’s population as 4,515,770 persons. They’ll have to change their figures to reflect a growth of at least one more person, to be correct. 

NGS’ new advisor to Louisiana, Denis J. Riordan, Jr., was sworn in on Monday, February 7, 2005. Since his swearing in, he has been in Tallahassee, Florida, training with Ronnie Taylor, National Ocean Service Advisor to Florida. That is, until the morning of February 10, when his daughter Charlotte arrived a few weeks early. As we were conducting our brief phone interview, Denis was preparing to travel home to greet his new arrival! Again, Congratulations Denis! Since “milk” is the official drink of the state (adopted in 1983), the family should have no problem accommodating their new arrival. Denis lives in Louisiana with his wife, two sons, and baby Charlotte. He is a graduate of the “University of Florida.”  As he so proudly proclaimed, that’s the University of Florida, not Florida State. He will be stationed at the Louisiana Spatial Reference Center. His main focus will be working with state and parish contacts, on Louisiana subsidence issues. 



***Charlotte Riordan***

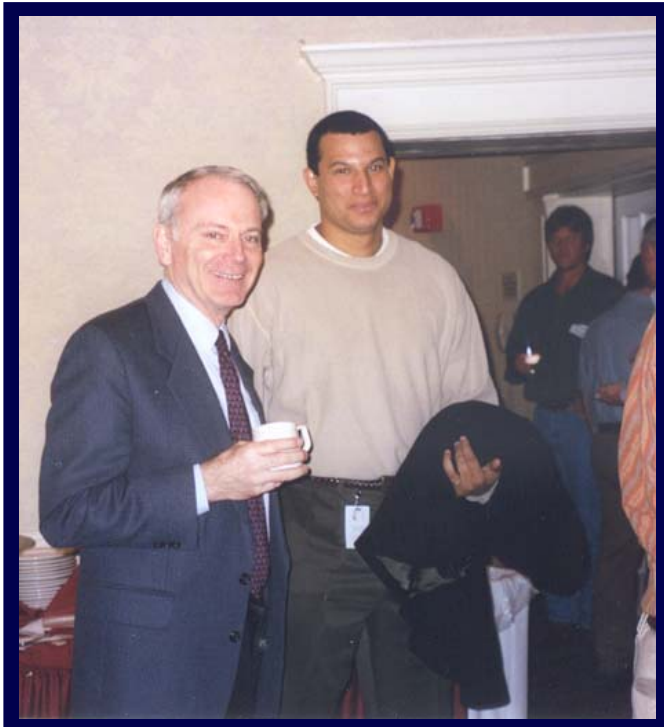
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7lbs. 9oz.



***Charlotte and Mom***

## NGS Convocation A Big Success



*Charlie Challstrom and Eric Linzey*

Highly Successful — the rating given by those who attended the NOAA/NGS Convocation of 2004. As most of us at NGS know, convocation is a time for staff, state advisors, and other external customers, to come together, share experiences, and discuss future operations.

According to our director, Charlie Challstrom, “it’s a place and time when we all meet together and renew our connections with one another — with those who are representing us in the field, the State Advisors, and with those who use our technology.”

Based on the article, presentations reflected NGS’ six priorities — Coastal Mapping (Cdr. Brian Taggart); CORS Enhancement (Richard Snay);

FAA QA/QC (Mark Howard); Height Modernization (Juliana Blackwell); NSRS Adjustment (Maralyn Vorhauer); and Specifications, Guidelines and Tools (Joe Evjen).

A significant highlight at the convocation was the *Vision of NGS in 2010*, where it states that:

**Everyone can know where he or she is and where other things are...anytime, anyplace.**

**Everyone will have a role in maintaining and evolving the National Spatial Reference System.**

**Everyone will have a role in developing specifications, guidelines, tools and models.**

**Everyone will have a role in building outside capacity of a diverse group of users.**

**Everyone will support the NGS priorities (see list above).**

Our Deputy Director, Dave Zilkoski, looks forward to NGS’ future. Commenting on the convocation, Dave stated, “the strongest impression I carried away from the convocation was that people really felt empowered to influence what NGS will be doing in five to ten years.” Convocation organizer Gerry Mader was nicely surprised by the convocation’s success. He said, “I believe it was the first time I have heard people say, ‘Hey, let’s do this again, soon.’” Overall, there was a general feeling of accomplishment from convocation participants. See you at this year’s convocation!





## Geo- What?

*By - Casey Brennan*

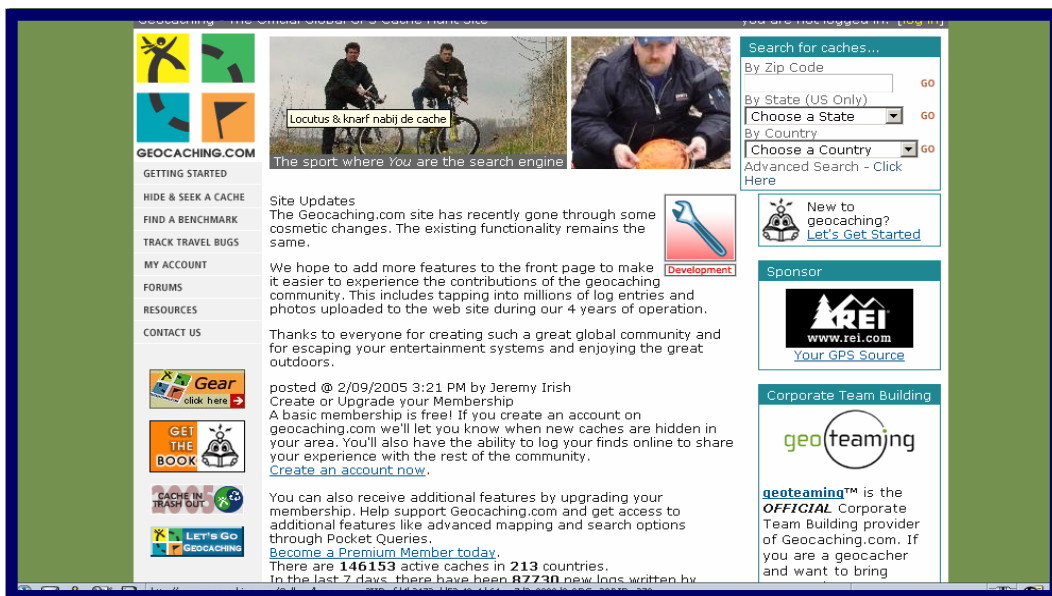
A lot of us have heard of the Geocaching community, but I am not sure as many of us are familiar with a smaller subset of this group, the benchmark hunters. For those who don't know, Geocaching is a growing activity that

currently claims about 500,000 participants worldwide. As a subset of the cacher community, seekers of a different breed find treasures of a different

sort — benchmarks! “Benchmark hunters” typically refer to any sort of survey disc as a benchmark. They retrieve data sheets from NGS’ page or the geocaching web site (<http://www.geocaching.com/> — owned and operated by Jeremy Irish), and then head out for a fun day of mark recovery. It’s important to note, though, some hunters use this activity as more than a part-time hobby. Recent numbers on the geocaching web site show nearly 58,000 benchmarks recovered, to date (Feb. 2005). Unfortunately, most cachers report to the Geocaching web site, while only a small minority reports directly using NGS’

mark recovery form. In addition to reporting recoveries, some cachers take the time to report errors: including improper county coding, outdated descriptions, and even destroyed marks. The best news is the sport is

thriving. Evidence of its popularity is reflected on the geocaching web site’s newly created “NGS

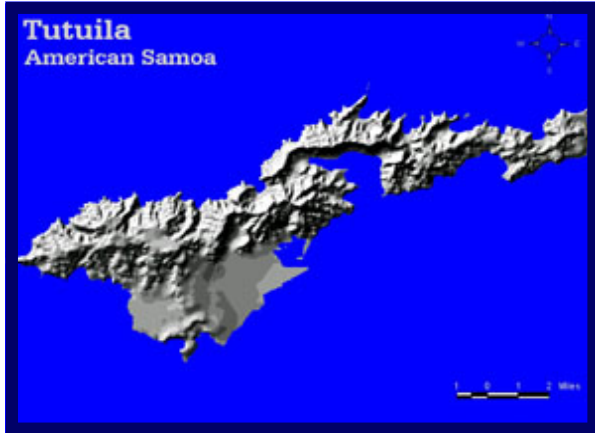


forum.” As a result of interactions between NGS employees and the cacher community, the community responded with good feedback, in the form of questions and comments on a wide range of topics. If you would like more information on Geocaching, please visit <http://www.geocaching.com/>. To visit the NGS forum, point your browser to <http://forums.groundspeak.com/gc/> and scroll down until you see the National Geodetic Survey. If you have any questions or would like to get involved in the forums, please contact [casey.brennan@noaa.gov](mailto:casey.brennan@noaa.gov).



## NOAA Will Place American Samoan Marker

NOAA is scheduled to place a marker on an island in American Samoa (AS) during the 2005 Ocean Symposium/Festival, May 23 - 27, 2005. The site for the new marker is Tutuila



Island, in the vicinity of Pago Pago Harbor. This harbor was met with destruction on December 10, 1991, at the hand of Hurricane Val. This hurricane attacked Tutuila Island, killing four people, injuring 200, and leaving 4,000 homeless. This left the island in total chaos, since the harbor was its only major port. Furthermore, in Val's wake, there were nine longliner fishing vessels that had been broken and tossed along the harbor's northeastern reefs like plastic toys.



Diesel fuel and oil from the longliners leaked into the sensitive coral reef ecosystem. The clean-up process took years to complete. An important part of the removal process was coral transplantation. Since causeways had to be built to reach the vessels, reef damage was



unavoidable. Sections of corals had to be taken out, then cemented back into place. Finally, in early 2000, all debris was removed from the harbor. NOAA Damage Assessment Center and Fisheries personnel will be revisiting the transplantation site during Spring 2005, and again later to monitor the effort's success.

NOAA partners involved in the removal process included the office of Response and Restoration's Damage Assessment Center and NMFS. Additional partners involved in the commemoration include NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration and NOAA Fisheries. The marker will serve as testimony of the working partnership between the American Samoan Government and its partners. For more information on the Ocean Symposium and Fest or the U.S. American Samoan, visit <http://www.amsamoa.com/>.



## Editor's Corner

Welcome to my pilot issue of the NGS Observer. I hope you've enjoyed reading thus far. I look forward to serving your informational needs in the future. Please feel free to critique and comment on what you see, or would like to see in future articles. Preparation for this issue required extensive research; while reaching out to staff from various areas of NOAA/NGS staff — thanks to all who contributed. Moving on, here's a bit of information about me — I am a graduate of the University of Maryland, University College. I have an Associate's Degree in Teacher Education from Prince George's Community College and a Bachelor's in Communication Studies/Management.



I am number fifteen in a line of seventeen children; yes, there are 17 of us! I was born, and still reside in our “crab state,”



Maryland. I plan to remain here; at least until retirement. I look forward to learning more about NGS and its programs, while working with you in enhancing communication channels at NGS. I have a few ideas in mind, but I will need your help in putting my plans into action. My overall goal is to work with staff in making sure information is distributed appropriately (in correct format), to all who need/would like to obtain it. Thanks for your warm welcome.



## Upcoming Events

- USVI Conference — Coastal Protection, Infrastructure Development and Height Modernization throughout the Caribbean — March 1- 4, 2005 in Saint Thomas, Virgin Islands of the United States
- ACSM-CLSA-NALS-WFPS Conference and Technology Exhibition in Las Vegas, Nevada — March 18 - 23, 2005 at the Riviera Hotel and Casino.
- ASPRS 2005 Annual Conference — Geospatial Goes Global: From Your Neighborhood to the Whole Planet — March 7-11, 2005, in Baltimore, Maryland
- 18th Annual Geographic Information Sciences Conference — TUGIS 2005 — March 21 - 25, 2005 at Towson University (Baltimore, Maryland)



## Heritage Corner

NINTH CONGRESS. SESS II. CH. 5, 8. 1807

### CHAP. VIII. *An Act to provide for surveying the coasts of the United States.*

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the President of the United States shall be, and he is hereby authorized and requested, to cause a survey to be taken of the coasts of the United States, in which shall be designated the islands and shoals, with the roads or places of anchorage, within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States; and also the respective courses and distances between the principal capes, or head lands, together with such other matters as he may deem proper for completing an accurate chart of every part of the coasts within the extent aforesaid.



SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That it shall be lawful for the President of the United States to cause such examinations and observations to be made, with respect to St. George's bank, and any other bank or shoal and the soundings and currents beyond the distance aforesaid to the Gulf Stream, as in his opinion may be especially subservient to the commercial interests of the United States.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That the President of the United States shall be, and he is hereby authorized and requested, for any of the purposes aforesaid, to cause proper and intelligent persons to be employed, and also such of the public vessels in actual service, as he may judge expedient, and to give such instructions for regulating their conduct as to him may appear proper, according the tenor of this act.

SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted,* That for carrying this act into effect there shall be, and hereby is appropriated, a sum not exceeding fifty thousand dollars, to be paid out of any monies in the treasury, not otherwise appropriated.  
APPROVED, February 10, 1807.

February of 2007 will mark NOAA's 200th year in existence. In preparation for its milestone, NOAA began a series of heritage events; one of which was Heritage Week (Feb. 7-11, 2005). During that event, the Science Center was transposed into a "heritage center," that accurately represented the week's theme, "Treasures of NOAA's Ark."

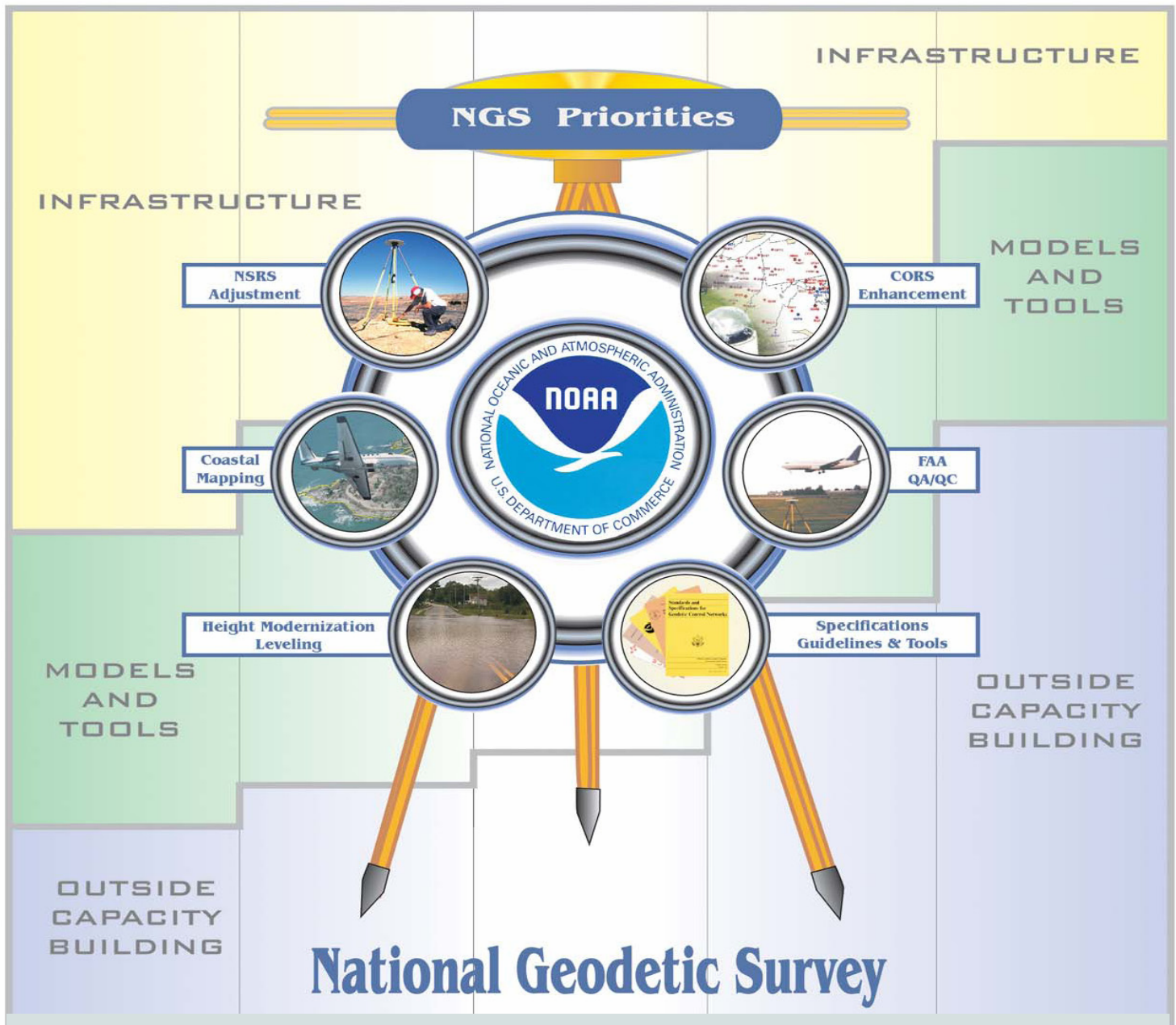
NGS displayed several historical artifacts, including a portrait of Ferdinand R. Hassler, NOAA's founding father. Hassler was a Swiss born geodesist, who conceived the plan, was placed in charge, and served in that capacity — on and off until his death in 1843. In his day, NOAA was called the Survey of the Coast.



1839 Geodetic Survey Marker



NGS Exhibit at Heritage Week



OUR MISSION.... TO DELIVER AND EVOLVE THE NATION'S FOUNDATION OF REFERENCE FOR LATITUDE, LONGITUDE, HEIGHT, VELOCITY, SHORELINE, AND GRAVITY THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES WITH CONSISTENCY, ACCURACY, TIMELINESS, CURRENCY, AND EASY ACCESS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY, COASTAL STEWARDSHIP, ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL BEING.